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Why is this young man all shook up? Elvis Presley performed at the University of Nebraska Coliseum on May 19, 1956, and at the Omaha Civic Auditorium the next day. This photo from the Omaha show appeared on the *World-Herald's* front page. Nebraskans debated the merits and morality of the shows for days afterward. [Keep reading.](#)

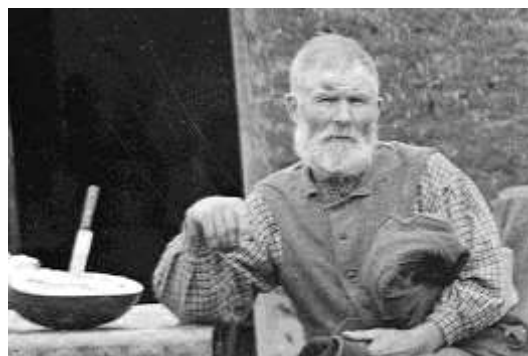
Two Nebraska Locations Added to National Register of Historic Places



In April the Albion Carnegie Library and the Oakland City Auditorium were listed by the National Park Service. [Keep reading](#).

May is Preservation Month! We'll be posting about historic buildings, the National Register of Historic Places, and related topics on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

A cow on the roof and a bullet in the head?



This 1886 photo of the Sylvester Rawding home north of Sargent is one of Solomon Butcher's most iconic photos. The famous "cow on the roof" photo is a bit of an illusion. Look close and you'll see that the cow is on a hill behind the house. And that lump on Rawding's forehead? Rawding told everyone that it

was old Civil War wound, a bullet that surgeons had been unable to remove.

But was that true? Historian Jim Potter was skeptical, and uncovered the real story behind the photo. [Keep reading](#).

We're working on a new exhibit of Solomon Butcher's photography. More details to come!

History Nebraska in the News

In April the *Scottsbluff Star-Herald* reported on our [recent archeological work](#) at Chimney Rock, and University of Nebraska-Lincoln's *Daily Nebraskan* [featured *Crafting Culture*](#) at the Nebraska History Museum.

NHM's current exhibit *Black in White in Black and White* received the most media coverage of last month's activities. Sharon Kennedy talked with [NET Radio's *Friday Live*](#), and Chris Goforth appeared on 1011 Now's [Pure Nebraska](#). The [Lincoln Journal Star](#) also reported on the exhibit.

Upcoming Events



The Nebraska History Museum is hosting the Pan Asian History and Heritage Celebration on May 3, along with various Crafting Culture Pop-Up Shops and workshops in May and June. The museum is hosting the Fourth Annual **LINCOLN UNITES! citizenship ceremony** and festival on May 10—come celebrate with new Americans as they take the oath of citizenship. And the museum is hosting a Historic Bike Tour of John Johnson’s Lincoln on May 18 and 25. **Keep reading.**



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(Formerly the Nebraska State Historical Society)

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[“What’s happened to our teenagers?” Elvis in Nebraska](#)

April 30, 2019



SATURDAY
MAY 19
ONE SHOW **Only 8 P.M.**
IN PERSON



ELVIS PRESLEY
RCA VICTOR ARTIST
Dynamic Star of
Television · Radio · Records
Nation's Only
Atomic Power

ELVIS SINGS
"HEARTBREAK HOTEL"
"BLUE SUEDE SHOES"
"LONG TALL SALLY"
Other Great Hits

With **Variety Show**
Singers · Dancers · Comedians
Tickets on Sale at
Schmoller & Mueller Piano Co.
Adm. \$1.00 & \$2.00 Tax Included
UNL. OF NEBRASKA
COLISEUM

Why is this young man all shook up? Elvis Presley performed at the University of Nebraska Coliseum on May 19, 1956, and at the Omaha Civic Auditorium the next day. This photo from the Omaha show appeared on the *World-Herald's* front page.

Backed by a trio, Elvis took to the Omaha stage wearing a bright red coat over a black silk shirt. The reporter noted his long hair and sideburns, and compared his stage moves to a "cooch dance, complete with bumps and grinds."

Nebraskans debated the merits and morality of the shows for days afterward. A big part of it was Elvis's "gyrations" and their effect upon young women. Omaha police reported that one young woman tried to take her clothes off during the show. The police "halted matters before anyone knew what was happening."

"What's happened to our teenagers? Are their morals and standards so low that they have to watch this Elvis Presley perform his downright immoral and filthy actions?" asked the writer of a *World-Herald* "Public Pulse" letter on May 24.

Another letter writer speculated about the mania: "Is it because youth is not subject to any serious requirements or duties beyond classroom requirements, much of which is of questionable value, resulting in a complete lack of a sense of proportion or values?"

Others defended Elvis:

"True, he has some kind of magic that makes the girls scream. I was one of them and I don't think it's anything to be ashamed of," wrote one young woman.

"Remember Grandma, Rudy Valentino, and the gals who went into hysterics over him. Mom, too," wrote another person, referring to a screen heartthrob of the silent film era. Another writer asked,

"What are teen-agers expected to do? Sit and listen to Chopin?"

Another issue, not dealt with as openly in Nebraska media, was the music's racial roots. Whatever the race of the performer, "rock-n-roll" was rooted in black rhythm and blues. Now it was crossing over to white audiences. On the same day as Elvis's Omaha performance, members of the White Citizens Council in

Birmingham, Alabama, picketed a mixed-race rock-n-roll show headlined by Bill Haley and the Comets. “Ask Your Preacher About Jungle Music,” read one of the protesters’ signs. The *World-Herald* reported the news on page one, right below its report of Elvis’s Omaha show.

Presley returned to Omaha in 1974 and 1977. His show at the Civic Auditorium on June 19, 1977, was one of his final performances. Portions of that show aired as a TV special after his death later that year.

Left: Ad from the Lincoln Star, May 18, 1956. Elvis was billed as the "Nation's Only Atomic Powered Singer" the same week that the US tested its first air-dropped hydrogen bomb. The 10-megaton warhead was detonated over the Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands on May 20.

—David L. Bristow, Editor

Two Nebraska Locations Added to National Register of Historic Places

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April 9, 2019

History Nebraska is pleased to announce two Nebraska locations have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Albion Carnegie Library and the Oakland City Auditorium were considered and selected by the National Park Service for listing.



The Albion Carnegie Library, located at 437 South 3rd Street in Albion, is one of the sixty-nine libraries in Nebraska that were built using a grant from Andrew Carnegie. The library was originally constructed in 1908 and has served as Albion's public library ever since. Designed by Eisentraut, Colby, & Pottinger, the library has been listed in the National Register due to its continued role in the educational development of the community from the time of its construction, 1908, until 1969, as fifty years prior to the present year is an eligibility requirement for listing in the National Register.

Although an addition was added to the rear of the building in 1977, the Albion Carnegie Library retains much of its original layout with open reading spaces, as well as much of its original materials, as demonstrated by the elaborate interior woodwork and original windows. The Albion Carnegie Library is the sixth property in Boone County to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places and the second in Albion.

The Oakland City Auditorium, located at 401 North Oakland Avenue in Oakland, is eligible for listing in the National Register for its significance in Politics/Government, Entertainment/Recreation, and in Architecture. Designed by Fremont architect Geroge Grabe, the auditorium's period of significance is from 1941 to 1969 as fifty years prior to the present year is an eligibility requirement for listing in the National Register.

The Oakland City Auditorium continues to serve the community as Oakland's City Hall, event venue, and is an architectural landmark in Oakland's downtown district. The Oakland City Auditorium is the eleventh property in Burt County to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places and the second in Oakland.



The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's inventory of properties deemed worthy of preservation. It is part of a national program to coordinate and support local and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect the nation's historic and archeological resources. The National Register was developed to recognize historic places and their role in contributing to our country's heritage. Properties listed in the National Register either individually or as contributing to a historic district are eligible for State and Federal tax incentives. For more information on the National Register program in Nebraska, contact the [Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office](#) at History Nebraska at (402) 471-4775.

Sylvester Rawding sod house, north of Sargent, Custer County, Nebraska, 1886

Solomon D. Butcher, photographer [RG2608.PH1784]



Over the years several myths grew up about Sylvester Rawding and his family. Rawding claimed that the lump visible on his forehead in the photograph was a bullet that struck him while he was a Union soldier in the Civil War, and which had never been removed. Rawding also claimed that his stepson (the tallest of the three boys in the photograph) had evicted him from his farm and forced him to move to an old soldiers' home in Kansas. He told these stories to a newspaperman in 1897 and this account became the basis for later interpretations of this famous photograph.

Research in Civil War pension records and Nebraska newspapers revealed that neither of Rawding's tales was true. The lump on his head was a cyst or wen, while Rawding moved to the soldiers' home by his own choice after a disagreement with his stepson. The story of Sylvester Rawding's life, along with more information about the photograph, is found in James E. Potter's article, "[A Cow on the Roof and a Bullet in the Head?](#)" from the Spring 2003 issue of *Nebraska History Magazine*.



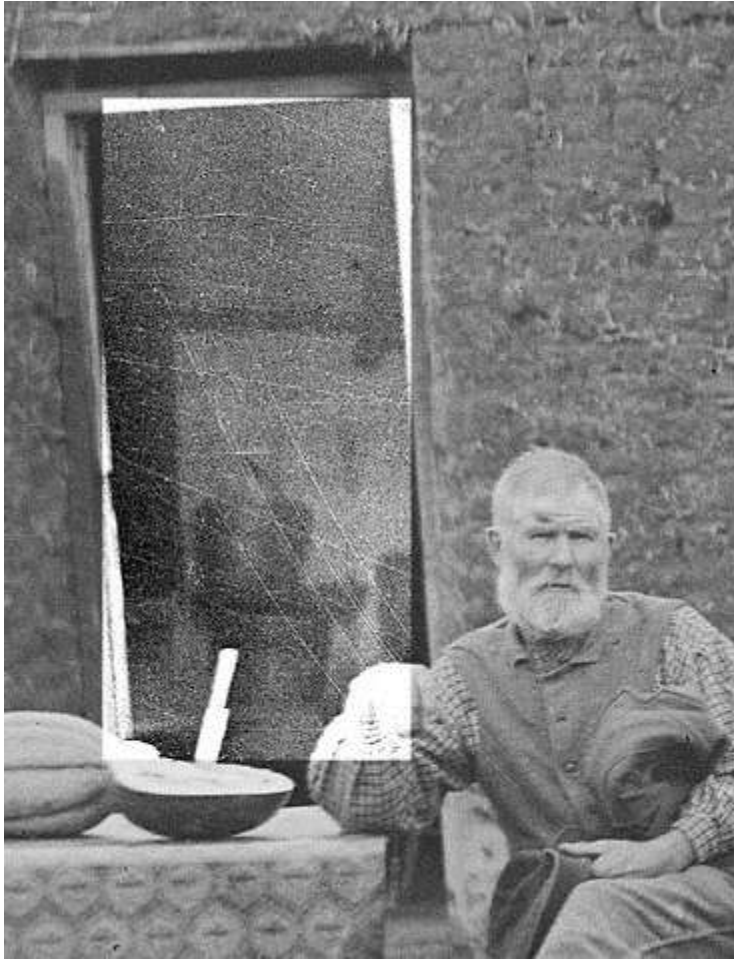
Is the cow standing on the roof of this sod house? It depends on whether or not the house was dug into the hillside.



Look at the dirt caked to everyone's feet. Everyone's, except the girl's, however. It is possible her father carried her from the house to the chair for this photograph. On other days, her feet were probably just as dirty as her brothers'.



There is a drop-leaf table under the oilcloth. It is probable that the leaves on this table were normally kept in an up position, causing the crescent outline on the oilcloth.



Advanced digital imaging technology allows us to look at historic photographs with a new light. In seconds, the interior of this sod house comes to life with only a few changes to the shadow and highlight areas of the negative. The information inside the doorway exists on the glass plate negative, but traditional photographic papers cannot reproduce that information. Advanced scanning technology captures that information and makes it available to all of us for the first time since the photograph was taken.